

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 01776 01 OF 02 181626Z
ACTION SS-25

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O 160115Z APR 78 ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6328

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 1776

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (SECT. INFO ONLY)

E.O. 11652
TAGS: SHUM, NU
SUBJECT : IAHRC VISIT TO NICARAGUA
REF: STATE 096306

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR MET WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA APRIL 15, AND MADE APPROACH AS INSTRUCTED REFTEL. THE PRESIDENT RESPONDED THAT HE IS STILL CONSIDERING INVITATION TO COMMISSION, BUT HE DOES NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO HAVE DONE SO UNDER EXTERNAL PRESSURE. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT MAJORITY IN OAS WOULD VOTE AGAINST HIM ON IAHRC VISIT.
2. AMBASSADOR MET WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA FOR TWO HOURS ON APRIL 15, AND READ TO HIM THE INSTRUCTIONS THAT URGED HIM TO INVITE IAHRC NOW FOR EARLY VISIT TO NICARAGUA. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE COULD NOT BE PLACED IN A POSITION OF APPEARING TO HAVE INVITED THE COMMISSION UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. HE HAS BEEN IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH THE COMMISSION, AND HAS RESPONDED TO SIX PETITIONS RECEIVED FROM IT. HE IS IN FACT CONTEMPLATING AN INVITATION, BUT THE STATEMENTS IN CARACAS BY PRESIDENTS CARTER AND PEREZ HAD MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO ACT NOW.
3. IN RESPONSE TO THE POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL MADE BY AMBASSADOR, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE CONTINUES TO BE A
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANAGU 01776 01 OF 02 181626Z

FRIEND OF THE U.S., AND THAT HE BELIEVES THAT A VISIT BY THE COMMISSION COULD DIMINISH THE "INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN" TO DISCREDIT HIM. HE SAID THAT THE USG MUST UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT TO PROTECT HIMSELF HE HAS HAD TO MAKE "NEW FRIENDS AMONG THE LATIN AMERICA DICTATORS", AND THAT " TO INVITE THE IAHRC MIGHT ANGER THEM." " I MAY NEED THEM SOME DAY."

4. AMBASSADOR REITERATED TO HIM THE BENEFITS THAT WOULD RESULT FROM AN INVITATION TO THE COMMISSION. SOMOZA RESPONDED BY ASKING: "WHAT GUARANTEES ARE THERE THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT CONTINUE TO HARASS ME EVEN AFTER THE COMMISSION HAS COME AND GONE? WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT ON THE CHRISTOPHER COMMITTEE OF SUCH A VISIT?"

5. BECOMING INCREASING AGITATED, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT DURING HIS RECENT MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF EL SALVADOR, ROMERO HAD TOLD HIM THAT THE ONLY POSITIVE RESULT OF THE IAHRC VISIT THERE WAS TO DIMINISH THE HEAT HE WAS GETTING FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY. IT HAD HAD NO POSITIVE IMPACT ON INTERNAL POLITICAL DYNAMICS.

6. SOMOZA COMPLAINED THAT HE HAD TRIED TO FOLLOW THE SUGGESTIONS FROM USG, BUT THIS HAD NOT BEEN FOLLOWED BY SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM IT. BY PURSUING ITS HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY THE US HAD ENCOURAGED INSURRECTION IN NICARAGUA, BUT HAD NOT ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY SOLUTION. HE STRESSED THAT HE IS A MAN OF PRINCIPLE AND CONVICTION. WHEN ALLEN DULLES HAD ASKED HIM WHAT HE WANTED IN PAYMENT FOR THE USE OF NICARAGUA TO LAUNCH THE BAY OF PIGS ACTION, HE SAID HE WANTED NOTHING. BUT NOW WISHED TO KNOW "WHAT IS IN IT FOR ME IF THE COMMISSION COMES?"

7. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE WISHED THE USG WOULD "STOP PICKING ON ME AND THIS SMALL COUNTRY." "I AM TRYING NOT TO BE A REBEL FOR THE SAKE OF BEING ONE." "I HAVE ACCEPTED YOUR SUGGESTIONS TO MOVE TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION BECAUSE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MANAGU 01776 01 OF 02 181626Z

I AM CONVINCED THAT IT IS THE BEST WAY FOR NICARAGUA."

"BUT THE MOVEMENT HAS BEEN TOWARD MORE INSURRECTION, NOT DEMOCRATIZATION."

8. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE WOULD BE A MAJORITY AGAINST HIM IN THE OAS. "BRAZIL AND THE BLOCK OF THE DICTATORS WILL NOT VOTE FOR A COMMISSION VISIT. YOU SHOULD TELL WASHINGTON THAT IT SHOULD NOT TRY TO FORCE THE ISSUE BECAUSE IT WILL LOSE." "THE USG HAS TRIED EVERYTHING TO PRESSURE ME, AND THE ONLY THING LEFT IS TO ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW ME." "SINCE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO DO THAT, YOU WANT THE COMMISSION TO COME TO SAVE FACE AFTER PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO VENEZUELA.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAGUA 1776

EXDIS

9. AMBBASSADOR DEMURRED AND, REFERRING TO PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS, STRESSED THAT WE HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THE PROGRESS THAT HAD BEEN MADE AND WERE ENCOURAGED BY HIS INVITATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS. HE ASKED THE PRESIDENT ABOUT THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY'S RESPONSE TO HIS ELECTORAL REFORM PROPOSALS, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT HE COULD RESPOND POSITIVELY TO FORMALIZE AT LEAST SOME OF THEIR COUNTERPROPOSALS. THIS MIGHT ENCOURAGE CONVERSATIONS LEADING TOWARD A PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT DEADLOCK. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE MIGHT TRY TO MAKE SOME COUNTERPROPOSALS SOON. HE STRESSED THAT HE ALREADY HAD SAID PUBLICLY THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT SOME OF THE COUNTERPROPOSALS.

HE IS CONSIDERING A RESPONSE ON TV, WHICH MIGHT BE MADE SOON, AND HE IS GOING TO HAVE LUNCH WITH THE ARCHBISHOP NEXT WEEK TO TALK ABOUT THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

10. THE PRESIDENT STRESSED THAT HE HAD BEEN CAREFUL TO AVOID REPRESSION GENERALLY, AND PARTICULARLY IN THE MATTER OF THE CURRENT STRIKES AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS. WHILE THE STRIKE LEADERS HAD HOPED THAT HE WOULD FORCE THEM OUT, HE IS SIMPLY PRESSURING THE SCHOOLS INVOLVED WITH CLOSING THEM. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE COULD DO AS PAPA DOC DID IN HAITI. "I COULD ARM THE POOR PEOPLE, BUT I WON'T." "I WILL NOT RUN FROM NICARAGUA EITHER."

11. AT CLOSE OF CONVERSATION PRESIDENT REITERATED THAT HE IS STUDYING THE QUESTION OF AN IAHRG INVITATION; BUT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANAGU 01776 02 OF 02 160222Z

THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO BE PUSHED TO MAKE AN IMMEDIATE DECISION.

12. CONCLUSION: PRESIDENT SOMOZA CLEARLY IS FEELING THE PRESSURE ON HIM FROM INTERNAL AGITATION (THAT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN LESS PRONE TO TOLERATE BEFORE) AND IS FRUSTRATED WITH US FOR NOT GIVING HIM ADEQUATE CREDIT FOR ACTIONS HE HAS TAKEN THUS FAR. HE SEEMS TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS DOING HIS BEST TO PLEASE USG, BUT THAT THIS HAS NOT LED TO A

POSITIVE RESULT, PARTLY BECAUSE OF OUR PREJUDICES AND OPPOSITION
INFLEXIBILITY. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THT HE IS BOTHERED BY
WHAT HE CONSIDERS A "DEAL" BETWEEN USG AND PEREZ AGINST HIM.
13. SOMOZA WISHED TO GIVE EVERY INDICATION THAT HE IS NOT
PREPARED TO STEP DOWN NOW, BUT RATHER THAT HE WOULD RESORT
TO REPRESSION AS A LAST RESORT. WE BELIEVE THAT SOMOZA
MIGHT EVENTUALLY EXTEND INVITATION TO IAHRC, BUT THATHHE WILL
TRY TO ORCHESTRATE THE TIMING HIMSELF- POSSIBLY AFTER THE
VISIT BY THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS OR AFTER A DECREASE
IN OPPOSITION UNREST.
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